of the dynasty. Emperors gave their support first to one and then to the other group: the program of Wang An-shih was adopted in whole or in part for a few months or years only to be abandoned and then, in turn, to be tried again. After the death of Wang, and toward the close of the Northern Sung, the most influential advocate of the reforms was Ts'ai Ching, a brother of Wang's son-in-law. Apparently Ts'ai Ching did not have the high-minded unselfishness of Wang An-shih, but used the latters policies to further his own ambitions and when in power displayed a lamentable vindictiveness toward his enemies. For example, he pilloried the names of his opponents by engraving them on stone at the capital. Ts'ai Ching was chief minister when the Northern Sung came to its disastrous close and has been regarded as responsible for the sad fate of his imperial masters. It may be, however, that his reputation suffers unduly through histories written by his opponents.

Eventually Wang's program was abandoned, but some of its less novel features, in modified form, were adopted for longer or shorter periods down almost to our own day. The failure of the plan to win permanent acceptance was probably due to the absence of a sufficient body of intelligent, enthusiastic, and unselfish officials to make it effective, to the venality and self-seeking of some of its advocates, and to the opposition of many of the scholar class. This is another way of saying that the system involved too sudden and sweeping a change in the existing *mores.* The fact that it had been proposed and had been so seriously tried, however, is, when considered together with the many Utopian schemes

of the Chou dynasty and the suggestions of later reformers, especially of Wang Mang, significant evidence of the political and social mindedness of the Chinese and of a recurrent tendency—even though usually submerged by conservatism—toward radical experimentation in statecraft and economics. The dissension accompanying it contributed to the weakness of the Northern Sung, and to it must therefore be assigned a part of the responsibility for the misfortunes of the dynasty.

CULTURE UNDER THE SUNG: THE NEO-CONFUCIAN SCHOOL

Wang An-shih and the debate over his proposals formed only one feature of that marked intellectual ferment which gave to the